

**OPERATING BUDGET
JOINT COMMITTEE HEARINGS
VETERANS AND SENIORS
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
AND
EDUCATION AND YOUTH**

Minutes

The joint Operating Budget Committee Hearing of the Veterans and Seniors Committee, Consumer Protection and Government Operations Committee and Education and Youth Committee was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Building, Smithtown, New York, on Friday, **October 26, 2001**.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Cameron Alden
Legislator Michael D'Andre
Legislator William Lindsay
Legislator David Bishop

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Doug Southerland - Aide to Legislator Carpenter
Sean Clancy - Budget Review Office
Paul Arfin - Community Program Center

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Donna Barrett - Court Stenographer
(*THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 2:00 P.M. *)

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

We're going to start the Consumer Protection and Government Operations. I don't have any cards, so I'm going to ask from the audience if anybody would like to address the committee on Consumer Protection and Government Operations? Seeing no one responding, I'm going to make -- we don't even need a motion. We're going to close the hearing then. So we stand adjourned.

LEG. D'ANDRE:

If anyone has anything to say for Veterans and Seniors, come up front and center. If not, we'll wait five minutes and adjourn.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

And just as one more invitation. If anyone's here to speak on Education and Youth, we don't have any cards up here, but we'll probably adjourned that at the same time we do Vets and Seniors.

LEG. D'ANDRE:

Let the record show that --

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Legislator Bishop is in attendance.

LEG. D'ANDRE:

Alden is here, Budget Review.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Legislator D'Andre is here. Legislator Lindsay is here.

LEG. D'ANDRE:

Lindsay, if it matters, is here. Do you have anything to say Mr. Lindsay?

LEG. LINDSAY:

I said hello to Mr. Bishop.

LEG. D'ANDRE:

All right. Vets and Seniors Committee will adjourn. Alden, if you want your committees to sign out.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

So we've got Consumer Protection is adjourned. Vets Seniors, adjourned. Does anyone want to speak before Education and Youth Committee? Consumer, we adjourned. Nobody wanted to speak. You want to put something on the record for it? Okay.

LEG. D'ANDRE:

Let the record prove that our esteemed colleagues are here.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

We've got no cards. No one has indicated from the audience that they want to speak on it, so we're going to adjourn the Education and Youth also. So all three committees stand adjourned at this point. Thank you. Yes?

MR. ARFIN:

I wanted to speak on Youth.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

I just announced -- yeah. Come on up.

MR. ARFIN:

Hi. Paul Arfin, from the Community Program Center of Long Island. And I wanted to speak with regard to the Youth Bureaus budget for 2002. The County Executive's proposed budget does not include a good number of items that were in last years budget under what was, I guess you call it the Omnibus Bill, last year. One of those items was an \$80,000 grant to the Community Program Center of Long Island to our Intergenerational Day Care Program. This year we are asking the Legislature, this committee, to consider renewing that grant, especially in light of the fact that the Legislature has put into force a Living Wage Bill, which takes affect as of July 1st. And in order for us and many others contract agencies to comply with that bill, we're going to need some support. I -- when the Living Wage Bill was before this Legislature several months ago, a lot of us made it clear that we were going to go under -- we all want to comply with Living Wage, but we need the resources to do that. We cannot pass on user fees to middle-class consumers at such levels that they cannot afford in order to pay for the Living Wage Bill.

So government aid is essential in order for us to be able to do the right thing as the Legislature did in the Living Wage. Yesterday, I spoke before the Social Services Committee, and there appears to be some relief coming from the State -- the committee, the Social Services Committee, wasn't aware of this yesterday -- that each year the State Department of Social Services -- every two years, I'm sorry, they review the market rates that they feel are fair to pay with 100%

State aid for children's day care. Those markets rates are about to go up dramatically. And that is, again, 100% State aid that could help the non-profit child day care providers to be able to comply with the Living Wage Bill. I know that the Legislators who were here yesterday were very interested in this and wanted to find out what the impact of this would be.

While there be some relief, some help to comply with Living Wage, that may not be enough for many agencies. For us, just to repeat myself one time, that \$80,000 grant, which was in the Omnibus Bill, is very important to us. So I ask this committee in its deliberations to consider renewing that grant that we received last year for \$80,000.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Thank you very much for your comments. Any questions?

LEG. D'ANDRE:

When we passed the Living Wage Bill, the union people were telling us that they were going to get us funds from Albany. I don't know exactly what they meant by that, but they were pretty sure that we're going to get some more funds from Albany for this. Now where that is now, I have no idea. Maybe, you know, young man.

LEG. LINDSAY:

My name is Bill Lindsay.

LEG. D'ANDRE:

Bill Lindsay, maybe you know.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Increased aid for reimbursement of child care and elder care?

LEG. D'ANDRE:

That man that was sitting with us in the coffee room, he said -- but that was stated, like almost assuredly, we're going to get this help. I was just wondering since your in the union, whether you heard anything about that.

LEG. LINDSAY:

No.

MR. ARFIN:

Well, hello. What I was talking about only has to do with child care. And the Legislature, when they adopted the Living Wage Bill during the summer time, had no awareness of the market rate increases that were just announced about 10 days ago. So I know that I was here, and I went on record against the Living Wage because of this very issue. That there was no -- no -- nobody had any assurances that funding would be -- would come forth. Some Legislators did say that they had some encouraging signs from the State that money might come, but they were no guarantees.

LEG. D'ANDRE:

No. Nothing's guaranteed from Albany.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Legislator Lindsay.

LEG. LINDSAY:

If I'm not mistaken, what was talked about was reimbursement rates.

What you were concerned about was the two year lag between the time that the -- that the rate increases incurred until that can be processed to reimburse you, am I right or wrong?

MR. ARFIN:

No. I'm sorry, but the market rate increases would -- there is no lag. There is no lag. The Commissioner of Social Services said yesterday that they can could take affect as early as December 1st, 2001.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

So you can get reimbursed from the State immediately then.

MR. ARFIN:

That's right.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

So that answer your question.

MR. ARFIN:

But all I'm saying is it's not -- the amount of market rate increase will not cover the cost of the Living Wage Bill for many of the providers. That's what I'm saying.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Okay. Thank you very much. It doesn't appear that there's any other questions. Again, I'm going to ask, from the audience, if anybody else wanted to address any of the committees? Seeing no one take me up on my offer, we stand adjourned then. Thank you.

(*THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 2:15 P.M.*)